

June 1985

## STUDY OF OL's SERVICE ENVIRONMENT AND WAYS TO ENHANCE OL's IMAGE

The Director of Logistics has asked IMSS to undertake a directorate-level objective to enhance OL's image as a service organization. The following questions serve as a point of departure to help us determine how OL can improve its services/support....or better acquaint other components with our role in the Agency. Feel free to tailor the questions to your component or expand them as you think best contributes to this effort. Please add continuation sheets as needed.

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1. In your component, what activities/products/services act as "image creators" for you and OL?
  - a. IMSS acts as the focal point for many planning efforts and OL activities, in compiling OL responses to the office of the DDA. Thus the OL image, in these situations, is generated within IMSS, from input provided by OL components.
  - b. The adjudication of or response to all matters having to do with personal property claims; the delivery of lectures on this subject.
  - c. Originating or coordinating Agency regulations as they may pertain to OL.
  - d. IMSS is the "home" of OL's data word processing services. Therefore, the IMSS image is affected by a variety of responses within this discipline (exclusive of the LIMS project).
  - e. It is well known that the OL focal point for the development of LIMS is vested in IMSS--especially within the role of the Deputy Chief. Thus, the LIMS image is controlled from this component.
  - f. It is an IMSS responsibility to plan office-wide activities (such as certain kinds of conferences, MBO actions, emergency preparations, etc). IMSS has, therefore, an image of considerable internal exposure.

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g. Reports of Survey require IMSS response--our image is created by the degree of timeliness in which these responses are provided and by the findings provided in these responses. This function provides Agency-wide exposure.

h. Memorandums of Understanding, Interagency Support Agreements, administrative plans and inputs to the creation of Logistics Annexes provide more visibility of the IMSS image.

i. The proceedings of the MLD Panel are of interest to MLD careerists--but are likely watched by others in OL.

j. The creation of field guides and operational handbooks provide broad visibility--in which the content and quality is a direct reflection of authorship and proper coordination within IMSS.

k. The development of LOCS, with its potential for automating logistics operations world-wide, will reflect IMSS ability to provide new forms of decentralized ADP support.

l. The OL-level Records Management Officer is housed in IMSS. The condition of OL records may be perceived as an image maker.

m. IMSS acts as the focal point for and administrator of the Suggestion Awards Program, as this project impacts OL. In effect, IMSS acts as an expeditor on behalf of the suggestor and those who manage the Program on an Agency-wide basis.

n. The OL Wang Systems Administrator is based in IMSS. The responsiveness of the position's incumbent, on a wide variety of word processing-related matters, reflects the IMSS can-do ability.

2. What do you think are your customers' perceptions of your component's services and image in each of the above areas? Key your answer to the appropriate letter in Question 1.

a. It is believed that IMSS, acting for OL, does provide quality input to the DDA. In the past, there has been feedback to this effect. Requests for time extensions could be considered negative but these are only asked for under extenuating circumstances.

b. The image created on the basis of responding to claims is currently believed to be excellent. Responsiveness is predicated on workload. Interpretations of regulations and guidance is believed to be fair; the "customer" is often given the benefit of the doubt where possible. Adverse publicity is more likely to come from ACRB action than from unilateral IMSS action, if/when it occurs.

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c. It is suspected that this image creator provides mixed reactions from a variety of customers. These reactions range from total ~~support~~ and appreciation for our efforts to some degree of frustration with the time it takes to properly respond. In addition, the customer may not be entirely happy with the response when it comes, due to his lack of knowledge about OL, bureaucratic processes and possible other regulations. This can best be described as a "no win situation"--yet IMSS cannot be accused of poor performance.

d. Data processing customers are, for the most part, internal to OL. The DAS is still having growing pains and is not yet capable of meeting all of its objectives, despite some modest successes to date. In sum, there is ample room for "image enhancement".

e. The recent turn of events on the LIMS project probably has created a negative connotation wherever this project is of interest. Optimistically, this image is temporary, until it can be demonstrated that LIMS has found a new and better way--and, most importantly, users can be shown some concrete version of LIMS. LIMS' life cycle time, still in the pre-implementation phase, is its greatest deterrent.

f. While IMSS appears to do the planning, the activity is controlled by the front office and thus the IMSS image is controlled. It is believed that OL components are aware of this "control".

g. Response to Reports of Survey are a function of resource availability and knowledge. The IMSS image on this task appears to vary, based on responsiveness. The entire process may be perceived as both necessary and bureaucratic--but not very dramatic unless a case containing a high level of visibility is involved. Rapid response does not seem to be one of the criteria for a positive image.

h. The viewpoint suggested in para. g, above, appears to apply to these forms of support.

i. The MLD Panel has had an excellent track record to date--which is of primary interest to MLD careerists. The availability of headroom is key to this image. Other components watch these activities with interest when the welfare of their data processing personnel is affected.

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j. The creation of these documents within IMSS has been limited by resource constraints. Documents produced to date have received praise from many sources (despite snide references to throughput time).

k. The IMSS image on LOCS is probably far short of what might have been anticipated 20 months ago. This is due to the unforeseen problems that have occurred in trying to field the system; i.e., responsiveness in providing a viable system at field sites has been poor, much to the dismay of those involved in the project's MBO milestones and the components who would benefit by automating overseas log functions.

l. Records Management--its mission, functions and procedures--may not have a positive image throughout OL, due to a lack of understanding in intent, purpose and activities. Its service/support image is an unknown.

m. It is believed that the Suggestion Awards Program now has a reasonably good image throughout OL--and in the DDA-level office from which it is administered. The image is predicated on the promptness of response by those in OL who must react to the suggestion. The suggestor may be unaware of the IMSS role in the processing sequence.

n. The Wang System Administrator role is becoming better understood as more apparatus is acquired and placed in use. The "growing pains" of a year ago appear to be behind us as these systems and their users become used to each other in terms of utilizing Wang capabilities. The Wang SA's efforts will continue to improve as: a) she becomes more proficient in her knowledge of this responsibility and, b) Wang develops software having new and greater capabilities which, in turn, provide a greater return on word and data processing efforts.

3. In which areas could your component project a better image or provide a better service? How? (Key your answer to the appropriate letter in Question 1.)

a. All of the services and functions provided by IMSS, as outlined in replies to question #1, could be considered as candidates for image betterment on the basis that there is always room for improvement in responsiveness, professionalism and resources. IMSS is a support function--and probably pleases most of its customers most of the time--if/when adequately staffed.

Cap out  
4. What additional services/support could your component add to improve customer relations and enhance OL's image? Please indicate priority.

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Achievable with present resources

Question #1 replies reflect 14 support functions having a mix of perceived image creators/success generators. The front office determines what functions IMSS will perform and is directly responsible for staffing this organization with the quantity and quality of personnel that will create a favorable internal/external image vis-a-vis work load. IMSS is staffed by both permanent and rotational personnel. Whether the alternating of this mix (more specialists, fewer generalists) would improve output and therefore image is an unknown. Present circumstances (workload/staffing complement) suggest that no new support roles can be added.

Achievable with additional resources (specify resources)

The corollary to the above is obvious: more resources (physical and mental) will provide a faster better product--or could be devoted to providing new services as levied by the OL front office.

5. What other factors do you think influence OL's image? How can they be changed to enhance OL's image?

a. Responsiveness -- provide support services more rapidly.

b. Professionalism -- staff positions of responsibility with qualified experts.

c. Attitude -- encourage, equip, train those personnel in direct contact with customers to cultivate/exhibit/practise a better "can do" relationship.

d. Discipline -- establish fair and consistent rules/conditions under which services can be performed. Avoid the "you call, we haul" syndrome unless the request is within reason. Encourage customer discipline.

e. Budget -- charge for services. This will reduce present demands that exceed OL's ability to perform.

6. How can we best communicate to others in the Agency the scope and importance of OL's services/support?

*Every OL component  
can say the same thing -- give us  
resources + we will  
improve -- why do  
we pay them?  
the managing?*

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Enlist the services of a PR firm or specialist to determine where and how OL's image can be enhanced and publicized--or commit an internal task force to evaluate/resolve the problem if it exists. Another point: the best form of communication is acquired through improved support. If OL is performing adequately, its range and quality of services will become well known without touting them.

7. What public relations tools could you suggest to enhance OL's image (e.g., employee bulletins, posters, brochures, video presentations, briefings)?

OL should not have to depend upon a blitz of propaganda to convince or inform the Agency of its presence--the proof should be obvious through services performed. Announcing the existence of OL to newcomers should be a function of any/every Agency introductory/indoctrination briefing. Employee notices, written in a human interest vein, should suffice to announce new, previously unannounced services.

8. If we were to conduct a voluntary random survey of the perceptions of OL within the Agency, who would you recommend be queried and with what specific questions?

Reference Question #1:

- a. DDA management staff.
- b. Components, whose personnel often submit claims. Also, past claimants.
- c. C/RD/OIS; OL components.
- d. OL components.
- e. OL and OF components. (True customers are not yet on line -- they eventually will provide meaningful responses.)
- f. OL components; DDA Management Staff.
- g. Past respondents to this service.
- h. (same as g., above)
- i. No survey required.

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- j. Users of these documents.
- k. LOCS users; FND/OC.
- l. OL components.
- m. Suggestion Awards Program Office; random sampling of past OL participants in the Program.
- n. OL users of Wang capabilities.
- 9. Has your component conducted a customer survey within the past two years? NO If "yes," please make copies of the survey and results available to IMSS. (Elaborate, if desired, on any changes made as a result of the survey or any changes suggested but not implemented.)
- 10. What other suggestions do you have for enhancing OL's image that are not specifically addressed in these questions?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
  - e.
  - f.
  - g.

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